

INTERIM POLICY REVISION
Extensions beyond 3 Years of Service for
Intensive In-Home Autism Treatment Services Exception Policy

This represents an expansion of current policy for extension to the three-year extensions limit on intensive services to be consistent with Governor Doyle's direction to Secretary Helene Nelson. The Governor's letter indicated that the Department of Health and Family Services should: "Create a policy to allow families to use the hours they receive under the three year plan over a four year period while staying within the current budget." The Department will seek further advice on the following policy once the Governor-appointed Autism Council is created. However, some families and their children are immediately affected by this change. This will serve as DHFS policy until further notification.

An extension beyond three years of service for Intensive In-Home Autism Treatment Services under the Children's Long Term Support Waivers (CLTS) may be granted in certain circumstances. This policy has been created so that the clinical effectiveness of early and Intensive In-Home Autism Treatment Services can be ensured without detrimental interruptions of service in appropriate circumstances.

A child will be considered for an exception to the three-year limit for intensive services if he or she has not yet received the cumulative total of weeks of 156 (three years) of intensive in-home autism treatment services. A child will be considered to have received a week of treatment services if at least 20 hours of services were billed for any given week. If a child had a week of service that was less than 20 hours per week, but the hours were made up within the monthly billing cycle, then the week will not be considered a week without treatment. If a child has accumulated at least 12 weeks (3 months) without treatment, then an exception will be considered.

The following criteria also apply:

- The family must have been ready and willing to accept services for any of the weeks counted as missed. For example, a family that opted not to receive services or missed scheduled visits would not be considered to have been available to take services. This will require documentation from the service provider.
- The child must be 11 years of age or younger at the time of the extension request.
- There must be a clinical justification that the child is making progress toward treatment goals and that the extension of service will continue to provide benefit to the child.
- There must have been six months of intensive levels of treatment service delivered to the child continuously at some point within the child's original three-year timeframe.

Finally, according to the Governor's directions, the granting of an extension of services must remain neutral to the DHFS budget under the waiver. The Department will carefully monitor the available funds for the intensive level of services, and may need to further modify this policy if needed to stay within the budget. Therefore, even if a child meets all exception criteria noted above, if the granting of the extension of services will exceed the state level budget, the request will be denied. An extension will be granted to each child only one time. The length of the extension will depend upon individual circumstances and will be authorized by the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services.